

Bio

Lonnie G. Bunch

Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture

Lonnie G. Bunch, 52, has served as the first director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture since 2005. As the museum's founding director, Bunch will work to identify the museum's mission; develop exhibitions and public programs about the history, culture and contributions of African Americans; and coordinate the museum's fundraising efforts and budget development.

Prior to his appointment as director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Bunch served as the president of the Chicago Historical Society (January 2001-June 2005). There, he led a successful capital campaign to transform the institution in celebration of its 150th anniversary; managed an institutional reorganization; initiated an unprecedented outreach initiative to diverse communities; and launched a much-applauded exhibition and program on teenage life titled "Teen Chicago."

Bunch has held several positions at the Smithsonian. As the National Museum of American History's associate director for curatorial affairs (1994-2000), Bunch oversaw the curatorial and collections management staff. He also led the curatorial team that developed the major permanent exhibition "American Presidency: A Glorious Burden." While serving as assistant director for curatorial affairs (1992-1994) at the American History museum, Bunch supervised the planning and implementation of the museum's research and collection agendas. He also developed "Smithsonian's America" for the "American Festival Japan '94," an exhibition shown in Japan which explored the history, culture and diversity of the United States. As a supervising curator (1989-1992) at American History, Bunch oversaw several of the museum's divisions, including Community Life.

From 1978 to 1979, Bunch was an education specialist at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, where he developed education programs for the museum.

Bunch served as the curator of history and program manager for the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles from 1983 to 1989. While there, he organized

several award-winning exhibitions including “The Black Olympians, 1904-1950” and “Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950.” He also produced several historical documentaries for public television.

Bunch has held numerous teaching positions, including as an adjunct lecturer at The American University in Washington, D.C. (1978-1979); as an assistant professor of American and Afro-American history at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (1979-1981); as a historian and teacher at Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. (1981-1983); and as an adjunct professor of museum studies at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. (1989-2000).

Bunch received his master’s (1976) and bachelor’s (1974) degrees from The American University in Washington, D.C.